
TOWER^{AND}TOWN

THE MAGAZINE OF MARLBOROUGH'S COMMUNITY AND CHURCHES



25-28 September 2025

**events
for all ages**



LitFest 2025

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TOWER AND TOWN

LitFest 2025

We're so grateful to Tower and Town for hosting this special issue. I hope you enjoy the reviews of some of the books to be featured in our 16th festival and will be inspired to explore more of the 45-plus events on offer.

Alongside a mix of debut, established and prizewinning authors, there are workshops, open mic pub events and the annual LitFest Big Town Read. Look out for copies of Susan Fletcher's *The Night in Question* hidden in local coffee shops to read and pass on. This year, we are all very excited about our children's events (see page 6) and our new Children's LitFest leaflet featuring some fantastic authors and a range of free activities to inspire the next generation of readers.

As a charity, Marlborough LitFest just would not be possible without local support. We really value our generous Friends, partners and sponsors, and the ever-growing band of volunteers. During the festival, it's wonderful to see 'LitFest event here' signs all over town from the

Katharine House Gallery and the Quaker Meeting House to St Mary's Church Hall, the White Horse Bookshop, the Green Dragon, Marlborough Library and Marlborough College. You can't miss our banners at the Town Hall and this year particular thanks go to Marlborough Town Council for their support. We're delighted to be welcomed back to St Peter's Church for a full day on the Sunday. And we're pleased to continue our partnership with The Parade Cinema, host of both The Big Book Quiz and Children's LitFest activities.

Final thanks go to the LitFest committee who work so hard to make the festival happen and to Angus and his team at the White Horse Bookshop who supply the all-important books. If you leave LitFest 2025 with a smile on your face, clutching a signed copy or two, we shall feel job done.

Marlborough LitFest runs from 25 to 28 September. Tickets from the White Horse Bookshop, TicketSource on 0333 666 3366 or marlboroughlitfest.org/tickets

Mary-Vere Parr
LitFest Chair

September Edition No 762.

Compiler: Hugh de Saram

Proof Readers: Julia Peel, Diana Foster-Kemp

Marlborough Churches
Together



John Suchet – In Search of Beethoven: A Personal Journey

John Suchet, the well-known television reporter and newscaster and now also a regular presenter on Classic FM, is an acknowledged authority on Ludwig van Beethoven.

This is Suchet's latest release, which stands apart as a deeply personal account of his relationship with the composer. He charts a journey from Beethoven's early years in Bonn to his life in Vienna, following in the composer's footsteps and interweaving his story with Suchet's own.

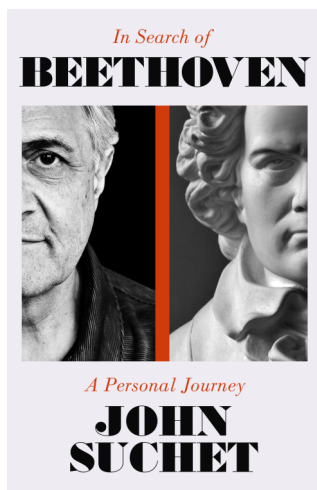
Suchet says that his lifelong fascination with the composer has shaped his own life and career. He writes of first discovering

Beethoven as a young man, how his music (and his third symphony the 'Eroica' in particular) accompanied him on some of his most challenging overseas reporting for ITN, his many trips exploring places where Beethoven lived and worked, and how his wife Nula now shares his passion.

This book is part memoir, part travelogue and part biography – for me a compelling combination!

Virginia Reekie

John Suchet will be in the Town Hall at 7pm on Thursday 25 September.



Alan Hollinghurst (The Golding Speaker)

– Our Evenings

In an increasingly polarising world - a world that Alan Hollinghurst appears acutely aware of throughout the novel - *Our Evenings* is a reminder that, in spite of all challenges, one must persevere to cherish life and the memories we make because, quoting Cicero, “slowly, without sensing it, we grow old.”

Written from the perspective of David Win, a queer actor of Anglo-Burmese descent, Hollinghurst’s seventh novel is from the onset an undoubtedly poignant story exploring concepts of race, class, sex and prejudice yet, above all, love and memory. With a style of prose that can be described as nothing short of mellifluous, he portrays both the insidious and explicit nature of hate throughout the novel from racism to classism yet, furthermore, how love underlines us and perhaps even makes us whole, from not only the various romantic relationships Dave has in his life but also

the beautiful platonic love we see between him and his mother. As a novel, it is a text that must be savoured, if only to pore over the subtleties of Hollinghurst’s writing as he effectively explores the intersectionality of David’s identity in relation to those around him without sensationalisation.

To once again quote Cicero, “the love you gave in life keeps people alive beyond their time.” For a novel that both begins and ends with death, Hollinghurst brings to life how important it is to live with not only tenderness, but conviction in one’s self and others, for we all live interconnected.

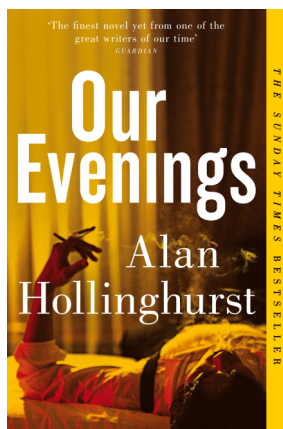
Meenashi Thethron Seenaj

6th form, St John’s Marlborough

Golding Speaker Sir Alan Hollinghurst will be talking to journalist and broadcaster Alex Clark in the Town Hall at 7.30pm on Friday 26 September.



Credit Robert Taylor



Shaun Walker – The Illegals: Russia's Most Audacious Spies and the Plot to Infiltrate the West

For some, the trick was simply to learn to smile more (back home, mirth was in short supply). Others went to greater, more painful lengths to blend in: one man got himself circumcised to pretend he was Jewish.

Why? Because they were Russian spies. Their job was to spend years integrating into the life and customs of their adopted Western country so as to learn its secrets and report back to Moscow.

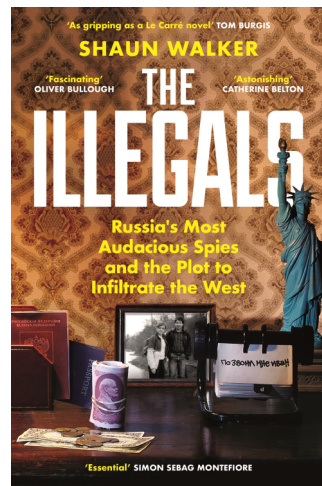
But, as Shaun Walker reveals in this fascinating account of 100 years of deep-cover espionage, while some 'sleepers' did achieve success, particularly in the interwar years, most did not. Either they fell foul of their own paranoia – one illegal

in Britain became convinced MI5 was bugging his shirt buttons – or of the paranoia of the Kremlin, which had them shot or sent to the Gulag on their return home.

A former Moscow correspondent for The Guardian, Walker has spent years delving into archives and memoirs and interviewing retired illegals to elicit a wealth of extraordinary material, much of it never before recorded. In doing so, he has lifted the lid on a very Russian sort of subterfuge.

Ben Tarring

Shaun Walker will be in the Town Hall at 10am on Saturday 27 September.





Lizzie Lewis of Tall Tales Theatre will be returning to perform Rumpelstiltskin in Pewsey and Marlborough libraries on Saturday 20 September.

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Children's LitFest

We have a wonderful programme of events for children, from storytelling to drama performances and talks from fabulous authors.

Master storyteller Ashley Ramsden will be here to tell a classic French story. Later, Jessie Burton, the acclaimed author of *The Miniaturist*, will share the literary treasures in her latest children's book,

Hidden Treasure (see review below). On Sunday, local author Carrie Sellon will have her briefcase full of magical potions from her *Pizza Pete* book series. Then Thiago de Moraes will be inviting the audience to join in with a live drawing session while he tells traditional stories about trickster gods from around the world (see review opposite).

Jessie Burton – Hidden Treasure

I really enjoyed reading *Hidden Treasure*, although it's for children younger than me (age 8+), because the way that the author described everything was very realistic.

The story is about Bo, a girl who finds something on the beach, which seems normal, but as the story develops, it becomes apparent that all is not as it seems. I liked her curiosity and perseverance while unsure about what it was.

The descriptions of the sea and the beach were vivid. It made me want to go exploring and see what treasures I could

find! Beneath the surface, the story isn't just about finding an object but how some people will go to whatever lengths to get what they want, not wondering about how it may affect the others.

It's easy reading, but it stays in your mind afterwards. I would recommend it to anyone who likes mystery and fantasy.

Georgia Watson, 14, Dauntsey's

Jessie Burton will be in St Mary's Church Hall at 2.30pm on Saturday 27 September and talking with author AF Steadman about writing across genres and for both children and adults in St Mary's Church Hall at 10am on Saturday 27 September.



Credit Lara Downey



Thiago de Moraes – Old Gods New Tricks

Trixie dos Santos, resourceful daughter of anthropologists, is about to be expelled from school, when the world suddenly loses all electricity: no lights, screens, generators, nothing. Realising that the old gods have stolen humanity's 'power', she decides to trap them at their own game.

Using her knowledge of mythology, Trixie summons trickster gods Exú, Loki, Sun Wukong (the Monkey King), Maui, and Old Coyote, to help her steal electricity back. With pet ferret Lorgi by her side, she embarks on a thrilling quest filled with tricky bargains, fierce challenges, and cheeky divine personalities. It's a race to reclaim power for humanity.



In her quest, Trixie calls on gods from world mythologies, encouraging readers to explore unfamiliar legends. Each chapter opens with a quote from a myth; the illustrations capture the essence of each god Trixie meets. Trixie herself is fearless, clever and ever resourceful: a super role model for young readers. Award-winning author and illustrator Thiago de Moraes has created a fast-paced, original and entertaining novel for readers aged 8-12. A very informative appendix offers more about trickster gods.

Mandy Pilgrim

Thiago de Moraes will be in the White Horse Bookshop at 2.30pm on Sunday 28 September.



Free activities for families and schools

We have plenty of free activities for families. Our annual 'Once upon a Trail' is back, for children to find the hidden books in the shops along the High Street. There will be craft activities in the Parade Cinema on Saturday afternoon and Lizzie Lewis of Tall Tales Theatre is returning for a family

theatre event in the White Horse Bookshop. We shall also be hosting free author events for schools in Pewsey, Calne, Devizes and Marlborough, featuring Tom Palmer, Catherine Bruton, AF Steadman, and Nathanael Lessore.

Susan Fletcher – The Night in Question (Big Town Read)

Susan Fletcher's eighth novel is set in Babbington Hall Residential Home, a converted house with outbuildings including pig styes and an apple shed with unusual and, mostly, very warm characters – so not your typical care home.

Florence Butterfield, the main protagonist in this story, has lived an extraordinarily full life. At 87 years old, she suspects there are no more surprises to come.

Then one midsummer's night, something terrible happens – so strange and unexpected that Florrie is suspicious. Was this really an accident, or is she living alongside a murderer?

The only clue is a magenta envelope discarded earlier that day.

Florrie – cheerfully independent but often overlooked – is the only person determined to uncover the truth. In doing so, she looks back on her own colourful past and we learn of a long-buried secret that can no longer be ignored.

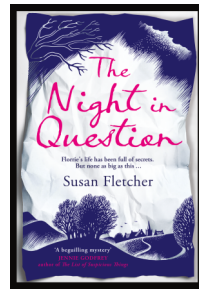
This event will give you a chance to continue the discussions that you may have had with your book groups about this year's Big Town Read. Copies are available from Marlborough Library and the White Horse Bookshop but look out for them in coffee shops around the town too!

Virginia Reekie

Susan Fletcher will be talking to former LitFest Chair Genevieve Clarke in the Town Hall at 4pm on Saturday 27 September. She is also visiting the Jubilee Centre Lunch Club on Friday 26 September.



Credit Griffin Books



Collectable Books Roadshow

Our local rare book expert Chris Gange will be at Katharine House Gallery (at the bottom of The Parade) to value and discuss your rare and collectable books from 11am to 1pm on Saturday 27 September. Whether you have a first edition or just something out of the ordinary, bring it all to Chris and find out more.

Debut authors – Alice Chadwick and Tuyền Đỗ

This year's event will feature two accomplished first-time novelists whose work has already begun to resonate with readers.

Alice Chadwick makes her debut with *Dark Like Under*, a hauntingly beautiful novel set in a 1980s close-knit rural community. At its heart is the story of a woman who returns to the village she once called home, only to find the past has a quiet but persistent way of resurfacing. Chadwick guides us into hidden lives and concealed histories through precise and thought-provoking prose. Expect a compelling exploration of community, memory, and the bonds that shape us, all underscored by a true appreciation of place and character.

Also showcased at this year's festival is Tuyền Đỗ, whose novel *Summer Rolls* was the first British-Vietnamese play to be staged in the UK and has now been adapted into her debut novel. Drawing on

her heritage, Đỗ explores themes of identity, belonging, intergenerational conflict, and the immigrant experience through the story of a Vietnamese family living in 1980s London. Đỗ's storytelling is infused with warmth and authenticity and promises readers an emotional human journey in a beautifully created setting.

Both authors, though offering very different narratives, share a remarkable ability to bring their characters vividly to life. Chadwick's subtle suspense and Đỗ's heartfelt warmth complement each other well, and this debut event promises a memorable literary introduction to two writers whose talents deserve to be celebrated.

Alice Padfield

Alice Chadwick and Tuyen Đỗ will be talking to writer and translator Daniel Hahn in St Peter's Church at 11.30am on Sunday 28 September.



Credit Beth Boswell



Credit Ruth Crafer

Jon Stock – The Sleep Room: A Very British Medical Scandal

In London in the swinging 1960s, female patients were put to sleep for up to five months in Ward Five on the top floor of the former Royal Waterloo Hospital for Children and Women.

Under the care of William Sargent, Physician in Charge of the Department of Psychological Medicine at St Thomas' Hospital, they were roused from their beds to be fed, washed and receive electro-convulsive therapy (ECT).

Sargent believed that narcosis, combined with ECT, reprogrammed disturbed minds. Never mind that his patients were there for disorders such as anorexia and having a socially unacceptable boyfriend. Or endured treatments such as insulin shock therapy, high doses of antidepressant and antipsychotic drugs, even lobotomy, without consent.

'Will' to his friends, 'Bill the Brain Slicer' to his critics, Sargent was the most famous psychiatrist of his day, Ward Five his personal fiefdom.



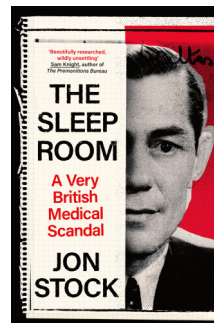
Credit Hilary Stock

Well known for the real-life research that underpins his spy and psychological thrillers, Jon Stock has left no stone unturned in this his first non-fiction book to uncover this very British medical scandal.

Tracking down Sargent survivors, including the actress Celia Imrie, he focuses on the humanity at the heart of this sorry tale. The monstrous beetle-browed Sargent looms large, but so does the courage of the women whose stories are foregrounded. There is even humour in Stock pricking Sargent's vanity: "the only time anyone saw Sargent move at speed was when the BBC was on the phone," he writes. "He'd run down the corridor to take the call, pill bottles rattling in his pocket."

Mary-Vere Parr

Jon Stock will be talking to LitFest Chair Mary-Vere Parr in the Town Hall at 4pm on Sunday 28 September.



Brian Bilston – Alexa, What is There to Know About Love?

In today's world, love isn't a generalised ideal amongst the public, making it difficult to write about love in a way that resonates with a wider audience.

Brian Bilston, however, embraces this challenge in a witty and humorous anthology of poems that discusses the progression of love across the timeline of humanity. He explores contemporary ideas of love in the digital age of Google and AI, along with the same concepts dating back to Ancient Greek philosophy and the Palaeolithic period.

As a philosophy student myself, I feel naturally drawn to the poem entitled 'Mrs Plato' that details the day-to-day life of the, often resentful, wife of the founder of early philosophy. Here, Bilston explores the less glamorous side of being married to the 'smartest man alive', how Plato's psychological questioning is never ending,

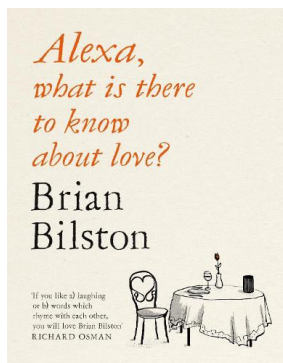
and how his job clouds his love life, traits in married relationships that remain today, and were not buried with Plato in 348 BC.

Bilston's imaginative, possibly implausible, ideas are part of what makes his poetry so appealing. He discusses the historical side of love that textbooks never focus on, solely based on an empirical observation of love now, and love then. While his comments on love are a delight to read, I do not recommend employing any ideas from poems such as 'The Caveman's Lament' in romantic pursuits: best to leave the cooking of 'Diplodocus with fried beans' to the experts.

Luke Barton

6th form, St John's Marlborough

Brian Bilston will be reading from this and his other poetry collections in the Memorial Hall, Marlborough College, at 5.45pm on Saturday 27 September.



Poppy Okotcha – A Wilder Way: How Gardens Grow Us

“This garden is a site of alchemy, turning waste to riches.” Poppy Okotcha is certainly doing that in her Devon haven as well as sharing how she achieves it with her readers.

A Wilder Way: How Gardens Grow Us is Okotcha’s first book – a delightful mix of elegantly-written reflections on the plot of land she has taken to her heart, explanations of her regenerative approach to horticulture, practical gardening tips and simple recipes. Her enthusiasm is so infectious that you immediately want to seek out the nettles you normally hate to make soup or rush into the garden to gather seed for next year’s crops.

Structured as an annual cycle, the book works through The Wheel of the Year, a neo-pagan calendar of seasonal festivals. It can be read as a month-by-month guide but it’s also easy to check back when you decide to make a pond, find out when to

sow or harvest broad beans or knock up some Easter biscuits.

Okotcha will be visiting home territory as she was a student at St John’s Marlborough after a childhood spent first in North London and then South Africa. Looking for independence and adventure, she became a model after leaving school, but soon realised the jet-setting life was not for her. Instead she has sought solace and satisfaction from learning how much a patch of soil can nourish us if we work with it and listen to what it needs.

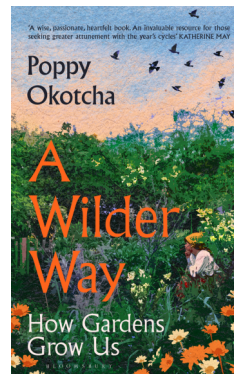
Already inspired by her approach I’m looking forward to gleaning more on how to get the most from my garden while nurturing it for future generations.

Genevieve Clarke

Poppy Okotcha will be talking to the award-winning nature writer Michael Malay in the Town Hall at 1pm on Saturday 27 September.



Credit Poppy Wood



Olia Hercules – Strong Roots: A Ukrainian Family Story Through War, Exile and Hope

“I often say that if I could do nothing else except chop for the rest of my days, I would be happy,” Olia Hercules writes.

Yet in February 2022, as the Russian tanks rolled into her home region of Kherson, the London-based Ukrainian chef and food writer couldn’t even chop a cabbage without bursting into tears.

Cooking – the heart of her sense of family and homeland – felt both frivolous and a betrayal. How could she cook while her brother defended Kyiv and her parents lived under occupation?

But how else to greet her parents when, in April 2022, they escaped Ukraine?

Preparing to meet them in a villa in Italy, chopping supermarket vegetables and herbs to make borsch speaks volumes: “You are safe, I am here, ... as long we can

sit around a table together... it cannot be the end.”

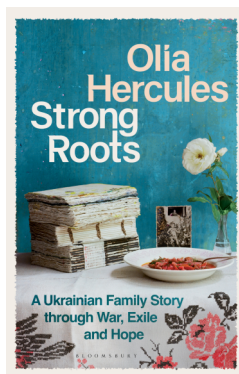
The 2022 invasion of Ukraine catapults Hercules into telling her family’s story to “help myself heal and to make you understand”. Woven through moving, often painful, tales of generational trauma, is a joyful ode to home and heritage, to stories and recipes passed down the generations. Hercules dishes up food-laden family gatherings, the tang of sour cherries from the orchard at her parent’s house, the taste of borsch cooked with beetroot dug from the veg patch not an Italian supermarket aisle.

Mary-Vere Parr

Olia Hercules will be talking to broadcaster and podcaster Hannah MacInnes in the Town Hall at 11.30am on Saturday 27 September.



Credit Joe Woodhouse



What's On in September

The Arts Society – Pewsey Vale

2nd Tuesday, 2.30pm Bouverie Hall, Pewsey. Dismantling the Devil's Acre – Slums that Shamed Victorian London. Speaker Charles Forman.

Follow the struggle to clear London of its most notorious slums, like the Devil's Acre by Westminster Abbey, about which Charles Dickens said 'the slum rolled its filthy wavelets up the very walls'. Learn how the slums came about, who lived there and why. The Devil's Acre, sitting on land mostly owned by Westminster Abbey, was eventually demolished and rebuilt in the 1880's and that housing still stands today.

Doors open at 2.00pm for refreshments and conversation and the lecture begins at 2.30pm Visitors very welcome - £7 on the door, payable by cash or card. For more information visit <https://taspy.org.uk>

Marlborough Gardening Association

4th September, Thursday. Outing to Tyntesfield House and Garden. For information contact marlbgainfo@gmail.com

10th September, Wednesday - Town Hall 7.30pm. Talk 'The Garden in Autumn' by Patricia Elkington

Marlborough Floral Club

4th Thursday, 2.00pm Mildenhall Village Hall. A Flower Prescription with Caroline Cooper. £6 to attend, no pre booking necessary. Information from Micky Graham on 01672 514301.

Brilliant Baroque with Johanna Röhrig

14th Sunday, 7.00pm – 9.00pm St Peter's Church, Marlborough. This outstanding violinist will perform a solo recital on her beloved Andrea Guarneri violin made in 1686. She will also talk about her instrument, the development of baroque violin music as well as her own musical journey. Johanna is performing gratis to help us raise money for St Peter's roof appeal. Entry is free and a retiring collection will be taken. For more information see stpetersmarlborough.org.uk

Newton Faulkner – Live Album Launch

26th Friday, 7.30pm – 9.30pm St Peter's Church Marlborough. The multi-platinum-selling singer-songwriter will launch his eighth studio album: 'OCTOPUS'. Five years in the making this album is a bold, colourful record with contributions from Reuben James, Dan Smith (The Noisettes), Lessie and Los Bichos guitarist Serra Petale. Tickets and Album plus ticket bundles are available from Sound Knowledge in-store, over the phone on 01672 511106 or via stpetersmarlborough.org.uk

M R James – A one-man performance by Toby Burchell

27th Saturday 7.00pm – 9.00pm. The Merchant's House, High Street, Marlborough.

In this candlelit one-man performance,

What's On in September

Toby Burchell performs two chilling tales by the finest writer of the ghost story genre, M R James. Originally narrated by James himself as an entertainment for friends, these are the perfect traditional ghost stories. Tickets £19 (£16 for members) at themerchantshouse.co.uk

Marlborough LitFest 25th Thursday – 28th Sunday

This year's LitFest Programme is packed with more than 45 events for all ages. These include 2025 Golding Speaker Alan Hollinghurst, Brian Bilston, Mary Portas, John Suchet, Rupert Everett, Jessie Burton, Clare Chambers, Andrew Miller, Lucy Hughes-Hallet, Valentine Low, Poppy Okotcha, Olia Hercules, William Hanson and Sam Dalrymple. The programme has something to tempt everyone from Jane Austen fans to lovers of biography, history, memoir, music, politics, nature and gardening. Topics range from Beethoven to Russian spies and Ukraine, from psychiatry

to shopping and how to navigate modern day etiquette and our digital world. For more information and tickets see www.marlbroughlitfest.org

Programmes are available from The White Horse Bookshop or view on line.

School Dates

Please see school websites for any updated information.

Marlborough St Mary's Primary and Preshute Primary term begins Wednesday 3rd September.

Marlborough College term begins Tuesday 2nd September Shell, new Lower Sixth Pupils, Prefects and Heads of House. Wednesday 3rd all other pupils between 6.00pm and 9.00pm. Exeat 12.00noon Friday 26th – 9.00pm Monday 29th September.

Linda Illsley

What's On Editor



Lucy Hughes-Hallett – The Scapegoat: The Brilliant Brief Life of the Duke of Buckingham

This is a very good book by biographer Lucy Hughes-Hallett. It says a lot that I was disappointed to finish it after working my way through its some 600 pages.

My own next book, on the Tudor theatre, covers much of the same era and there's some crossover, so I found the author's eye for detail fascinating and never irrelevant. I bet you don't know why the donkeys on the Ile de Ré wear trousers. I do now, yet the book had me thinking of Shakespeare's line: "Yet Nature [ie the author] as she wrought thee fell a-doting."

I thought the word 'Brilliant' in the title was publisher's hyperbole, but Hughes-Hallett seems to believe it of Buckingham, although much of what he touched turned to dust.

A belligerent member of the war-party, as Lord High Admiral, he supported a naval expedition against Spain that turned into the Armada in reverse.



She does recognise his astonishing ability to make the same mistake twice: in this case a second expedition, this time against France, which led to the annihilation of the force and the collapse of the Protestant cause in La Rochelle that it was sent to support. In this he stands in contrast to the King who promoted him – James VI and I, who like Nature, doted upon him, an obsession he was quick to exploit.

If he was brilliant at all, it was in the outward trappings: handsome to excess, an exotic dresser full of the charm that he regarded as a substitute for diplomacy and a genuine connoisseur of art and artists. He'd certainly get a job at Sotheby's. Despite the playing-down of its (anti?) hero's flaws, the book is set against a gripping backdrop: a very good read.

Nicholas Fogg

Lucy Hughes-Hallett will be in the Town Hall at 11.30am on Sunday 28 September.



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Nature Notes: Butterflies

2025 has been a particularly good season for butterflies, and you may have noticed more Peacocks, Red Admirals, Meadow Browns, Gatekeepers, Ringlets, or Brimstones in your garden than in previous years.

The warm spring and summer has led to an early emergence for many species — notably in Savernake Forest the elusive Purple Emperor (*Apatura iris*) has appeared at least a week earlier than over the last few years, and in good numbers too.



Male Purple Emperor, © Helen Llewelyn

Like most butterfly species, Purple Emperors are highly specific in their choice of host plants. Females lay their eggs directly on these plants so that, upon hatching, the caterpillars have immediate access to a suitable food source. Peacock, Red Admiral, and Small Tortoiseshell rely on Common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), while the Duke of Burgundy prefers Cowslip (*Primula veris*). In contrast, the Purple Emperor's host plant is typically Sallow (*Salix* spp.), also known as Goat Willow.

Males are the first to emerge, developing from chrysalides (pupae) that closely resemble Sallow leaves. Females usually appear about a week later, though their emergence tends to be more



Female Purple Emperor, © Helen Llewelyn

synchronised, often occurring within a short time window — an adaptation likely aimed at maximising mating opportunities.

This year was particularly special for me, as it marked the first time I've ever seen a



Female Purple Emperor,
pupa
© Helen Llewelyn

*continued
next page*

Nature Notes continued **Purple Emperor**
pupa case. What struck me most was how well-camouflaged it was — perfectly mimicking the shape and colour of a Sallow leaf and blending almost invisibly among the foliage. It made me realise how many I must have unknowingly passed by over the years while searching for adults, never suspecting that one might be sitting quietly just above my head, waiting for the right moment to emerge.

Citizen science plays a vital role in helping us understand how butterfly populations are faring year after year. The Purple

Emperor population in Savernake, for instance, is carefully monitored each season — from egg-laying through to adult emergence — providing valuable data on breeding success, survival rates, and changes in distribution over time.

You can also contribute by submitting your sightings to the Wiltshire Branch of Butterfly Conservation via their sightings page: <https://www.wiltshire-butterflies.org.uk/sighting/new>

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News from the Churches

What's on at Emmanuel Church Marlborough:

- NEW! Starting this September, join us for our new weekly Sunday morning service at 10:00 AM on New Road, Marlborough, SN8 1AH.
- Children's groups available for ages 3 to school Year 4
- Refreshments served after the service
- Our 4:00 PM service will continue every Sunday, with crèche, Sunday School, refreshments for adults, and sandwich tea for the children.
- We also offer various activities throughout the week, including home groups in Marlborough, Pewsey and Ogbourne St George, as well as community groups. For more information and updates on our events, please visit our website at emmanuelmarlborough.org.

Marlborough Anglican Team with Christchurch Methodist Fellowship:

- St Mary's 5pm Informal Worship
- If you're new to the area or thinking about the faith, please consider joining us at 5pm on Sunday at St Mary's. We are friendly, informal and open to God's Spirit. In September our All age service will be on the 7th with a family tea at 4:30pm followed by a service for all ages at 5pm. On the third Sunday of the month, we break bread together.
- In September, Energize, our young

people's group, will meet on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Sunday of the month during term time.

- All age worship for September is on Sunday 7th. This month we will be thinking about 'Fresh Starts' and 'Jonah' alongside the new school term.

Children/Family Activities:

The Ark Parent/ Carer and Toddler Group

- Mondays in term time, 9:30 - 11am; Church Hall, Silverless Street. Information: cphilps2@gmail.com

Little Friends Toddler Group,

- Thursdays during term time, 10-11.30 am at the Wesley Hall, Oxford Street, littlefriends@emmanuelmarlborough.org

Explorers

- Fridays during term time, 6-7.15 pm at the Wesley Hall, Oxford Street, explorers@emmanuelmarlborough.org

NEW

Rooted

- Fortnightly at the Priest's house, 6-7.15 pm; office@emmanuelmarlborough.org

Youth Alpha

- Starting the week of 15th September, join us after school in Church Cottage for Youth Alpha. For ages 11+, with plenty of hot chocolate and cake! penny.families@gmail.com

Friday Nights

- Fridays during term time, 7.30-9 pm. Our

News from the Churches

youth club for school years 7-11 at the Wesley Hall, Oxford Street, Marlborough.
fridaynights@emmanuelmarlborough.org

Sparklers

- Monday, 22nd September, 3.45-4.45 pm (Doors open at 3.30 pm) at the Wesley Hall, Oxford Street, Marlborough.
sparklers@emmanuelmarlborough.org

St Mary's Informal Worship All-age service

- Sunday 7th 5pm, St Mary's, Marlborough (Children's tea at 4:30pm)

St Mary's Barn Dance- All Welcome

- Saturday 20th September in St Mary's Church. Hosted by St Mary's & Christchurch Methodist Fellowship, with a bring & share supper. Donations welcome.

Midweek Activities

Welcome Wednesdays

- A reflection, coffee and doughnuts every Wednesday, 10.30 am in St Mary's.

Emmanuel Church Homegroups

- Thursdays during term time, Pewsey – 7.30 pm, Marlborough – 7.45 pm, Ogbourne St George – 7.45 pm. Bible study, prayer and fellowship.
office@emmanuelmarlborough.org

St Mary's Women's Group

- Thursdays 10 am to 11 am. Join for coffee, chat, Lectio and prayer.
marlb.anglicanteam@tiscali.co.uk

Emmanuel Ladies Bible Study

- Every other Friday during term time (12th & 26th September), 10 am- 11.30 am. Friends discovering God's truth in the Bible (All women are welcome - onsite crèche available).
women@emmanuelmarlborough.org

St Mary's Parenting Course

- 'Parenting Children Course', starting Friday 12th September in Church Cottage, Silverless St. Six weekly sessions; seeks to help build strong family foundations and meet children's needs while setting clear boundaries. Staffed crèche for pre-school children.
penny.families@gmail.com

Other events

Ride n Stride, Saturday 13th September

- Annual national sponsored event. Raises funds for grants to historic churches. You can participate to be sponsored to ride or walk between churches. Visit as many churches as you like. St Mary's and St George's will be refuelling stations on the Ride & Stride map on this day. If you and or your family would like to Ride or Stride please visit the website:
<https://ridestride.org/>

Gone to pot?

I love pots in the garden. At the last count I had 107, which is a bit excessive, but we have the opportunity to grow plants that wouldn't thrive in this area.

Acid-loving shrubs are very special. They are generally evergreen and will have flowers early in the year sometimes followed by berries in the autumn. The new foliage on some varieties of Pieris is a beautiful pink. These plants are shade loving, all you need is a pot and a bag of ericaceous compost.

Container gardening is perfect for frost-tender plants, These are often flamboyant because they come from the southern hemisphere. My favourites are Callistemon and Mimosa. After their summer show they can be moved to a sheltered spot in the winter or fleece wrapped. Keep them on the dry side and bring them to centre stage again in the spring.

Gaps are starting to appear in our borders now. You could drop in a pot with a fabulous fuschia! No special compost needed and it will flower until November; then move it to a porch or garage over winter, give it a little water every couple of months and when you see signs of life in the spring, cut it back hard.

Evergreen shrubs like Pittosporum, Arbutus, Fatsia, Nandina and even small trees can be grown in containers spending the summer on your patio or in your border. in the winter they can be moved near the house for year round interest.

Some beauties like Acers are best suited to pots because they need a sheltered spot out of the wind and hate winter wet. Move them to a drier spot in the autumn.

Plants in pots do need a regular feed every two or three weeks in the summer and they will need to be watered. It is better to give a good soaking once a week than a trickle every day. Acid-loving spring flowering plants should be given a good feed with specially formulated liquid feed in September because whilst most other shrubs are going dormant now these plants are building their strength for their spring show.

The very best thing about container gardening is that you don't need a garden. A few pots arranged at different heights outside your front door are a joy that will lift your spirits. They're so easy to look after and best of all--NO DIGGING!

Carolyn Stimpson

Marlborough Gardening Association



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Marlborough Churches Together

Usual Sunday Services Times:

Society of Friends, Friends Meeting House, The Parade

10.30am Meeting for worship

St George’s Preshute (Anglican)

8.00am Holy Communion (1st & 3rd Sundays)

10.30am Worship

St Mary’s with Christchurch Methodist Fellowship (behind the Town Hall)

8.00am Holy Communion (2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays)

10.30am Worship

5.00pm Informal Worship (with Energize Children’s Church)

(1st Sunday of the month is All-age worship with Children's tea at 4.30)

St John the Baptist, Minal (Anglican)

9.00 am Worship

St Thomas More, George Lane (Roman Catholic)

11.00 am Mass

Emmanuel, New Road (Free Evangelical)

10.00 am Morning service

4.00pm Worship (every Sunday)

Marlborough College Services are shown at the College chapel

For more information and updates please check the individual church websites.

FROM THE REGISTERS

Baptisms - We welcome:

20/07/25 Isla Cripps: Adrian Cripps and Amanda Swatton.
St George's, Preshute

Weddings - We congratulate:

26/07/25 Katie Lauren Hooper, Joseph Robert Witcomb
St George's, Preshute

Departed - We pray for the families of:

23/07/25 Christine Taylor (78), White Horse Road, Marlborough
St Mary’s, Marlborough

The Bible - a book of books

Do you love losing yourself in a book? Or are you a story teller? Our local Literature Festival is a celebration of story: poems, plays, novels and memoirs, ideas shared, and voices heard. It's an opportunity for us, as a community, to gather and to listen, to learn and to reflect.

At the centre of the Christian faith is a story, possibly the greatest story ever told. It's the story of God's love for the world, told through Scripture, revealed in Jesus, and lived out in the ordinary and extraordinary moments of our lives. In a similar way to the Lit Fest, the Bible also includes a breadth of genres, including stories, letters, Gospels, poetry and prophecies. We can find out more about Jesus's life and teaching, how and why he died and how that became just the beginning of the next extraordinary chapter. Meanwhile, like any good story, the Bible is not only there to be left in our book cases or received on Desert Island Discs, but to be read, and lived, too.

Across our local parishes, we see that lived story in countless ways: in the warm welcome at the door of our churches, in the vows spoken by Godparents, in the quiet kindness of someone who notices a

neighbour's need, and in the faithful service of bellringers and musicians. As Christians, it is our role to share our hope, to act with compassion, to recognise our failings and our blessings, to forgive and seek forgiveness, and to remind each other that God's story is still unfolding, right here amongst us. Our shared life is full of chapters—some joyful, some difficult—but always shaped by the belief that God is with us.

As the festival begins, let's celebrate the creativity and wisdom of those who share their stories. As people of faith, we too are called to be storytellers. So, let's revisit the Bible stories that we were told as children and share them with our children and grandchildren. Let's continue to explore the Bible for ourselves, a book of books, gaining a new and deeper understanding, and start telling others how this precious book gives our life meaning.

As we tell our stories, I pray that others may see something of God's love being told through us.

Sarah Musgrave LLM

Family News - Naomi Painter

Mum - Audrey Peck - was born just outside Marlborough in the village of Lockeridge in 1934.

She loved this part of the world and never wanted to be anywhere else.

She met our Dad, Roger Peck, when she was 18 years old. He lived in the neighboring village. They married in West Overton church in 1955.

They set up home in Marlborough behind the Town Hall on Perrins Hill where Dad had his Shoe shop, Pecfords.

That's where the three of us were born. Sally 1960. Caroline 1962. Sue 1964

In 1970 we moved up onto the High Street where I'm sure many people will remember us from when so many families would bring their children to the shoe shop for Start-rite shoes.

Mum's passion was teaching and supporting her local community, and she excelled at both. She taught at St Mary's infant school in Marlborough when it was

located on Herd Street. Many of her pupils, who are now in their 50s and 60s, remember her well and still refer to her as Mrs. Peck.

She went on to be Head Teacher at an Infant school in Swindon until she retired.

In the early '90s Mum became first a local Councillor and then a district Councillor representing the Liberal Democrats. She loved supporting her local community and helping to make a difference to people's lives.

More recently she has given her time to volunteering at The Merchant's House and also here at Tower and Town where she was the Family News editor for many years.

Mum's final years were spent living at Castle Court being surrounded by a wonderful community of friends and also her ever increasing family, comprising her three daughters, seven grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

Sally, Caroline & Sue

At the beginning of August Joy Lamerton celebrated her 100th birthday.

Joy lived in Marlborough from 1968 until 2022' She made many friends around the town as well as at Christchurch Methodist Church in the town. Approximately 30

people attended to celebrate with her in Whitstable where she now lives with her son Neil and daughter in law Susan. Other relatives and friends came from all over the world, including Amsterdam, Dublin, Wales, Wiltshire and Australia to enjoy the festivities over the weekend.

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Please send articles and letters to the monthly editor or the chairman,
other notices or announcements to the compiler.

All items for the October issue by Tuesday 9th September please.

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